

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

A history of the conscience fund.

FEBRUARY 4, 1886.—Referred to the Committee on Finance and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *February 3, 1886.*

HON. JOHN SHERMAN,

President pro tempore United States Senate :

SIR: The Department is in receipt of Senate resolution of the 28th ultimo, directing the Secretary of the Treasury to inform the Senate as to the origin of what is known as the "conscience fund" in the Treasury of the United States, the amount of the same, and what disposition is made thereof.

In reply thereto I have the honor to state that the term "conscience fund," as applied to donations received by the Treasury from unknown sources, has its origin in the popular belief that such donations are made by persons who have at some time wrongfully taken or withheld from the United States moneys which were justly due, and who thus seek to make restitution to the Government.

The moneys which have thus been received from time to time have been covered into the Treasury as "miscellaneous receipts from persons unknown," and have been used for the general purposes of the Government in connection with moneys received from other sources, having at no time been distinguished from other moneys in the general Treasury.

The first donation of this character of which the Department has any record was made by the Register of the Treasury in 1827, "for moneys received from a person unknown, stated to be on account of imports and tonnage," and the total amount received by the Treasury up to June 30, 1885, was \$220,747.26.

Respectfully, yours,

DANIEL MANNING,
Secretary.

